

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim Status

Claims 1-34 are pending in this application. Claims 1-10, 27 and 28 have been allowed. Claims 11-17 and 29-30 having been withdrawn from consideration. Claims 18-26 and 31-34 have been canceled without prejudice, by this amendment. No new matter has been added by these amendments.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 18-25, 31 and 32 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,172,825 to Takahashi ("Takahashi").

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection, however, in order to expedite prosecution, Applicants have canceled rejected claims 18-25, 31 and 32 without prejudice or disclaimer to overcome the rejections.

Double Patenting Rejections

Claims 18-26 and 31-34 have been rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as allegedly being unpatentable over claims 1-13 of U.S. Patent No. 6,922,291. Moreover, the Examiner stated that claims 18-26 and 31-34 provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 32 and 33 of copending Application No. 10/783,788.

Applicants respectfully disagree with the characterization of the claims hereof, of USP 6, 922,291 and of co-pending application 10/783,788 and of the teachings attributed to the prior art. However, in order to expedite prosecution, Applicants have canceled rejected claims 18-25, 31 and 32 without prejudice or disclaimer to overcome the rejections.

AUTHORIZATION

In view of the foregoing, all claims as presented herein are allowable over the art of record and that the application is hereby placed in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested.

Applicants believe no fees are required for this Amendment and that the petitioned extension of time is sufficient for its filing. If, however, an additional extension of time is necessary to render this filing timely, such is hereby petitioned and the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for this paper, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1232-5303.

In the event that a telephone conference would facilitate prosecution, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number provided.

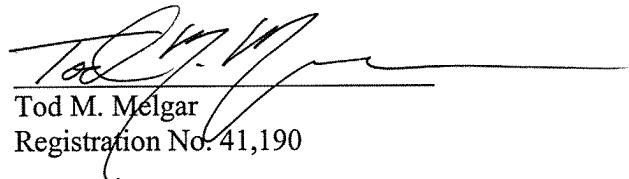
An early and favorable examination on the merits is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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